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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Women Church Assistants

Among the new significant movements in the realm of the church is that which is calling for trained women leaders. An important aspect of this movement is the standardization of preparation. This is the subject of a contribution in *Religious Education*, December, by Miss Agnes Mabel Taylor, Dean of the Congregational Training School for Women, Chicago, and the President of the Congregational League of Church Assistants. She bases her study upon extensive recent correspondence and personal conference with assistants, ministers, board representatives, and training-school heads of various denominations. Also she made a study of the data recorded in the catalogues and other literature issued by thirty-four training schools in the United States and Canada, in which preparation is offered for home missionaries, deaconesses, and salaried workers in local churches. It is observed that women assistants are serving an increasing number of churches. This appears to be true certainly in the Congregational, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. In the Congregational church there is an organization with established headquarters for the promotion of the interests relating to the service rendered by salaried women workers. Baptist churches also are asking for trained women assistants. "The President of the Baptist Missionary Training School of Chicago received from Baptist ministers recently during four months eighteen letters asking that trained women be recommended for positions as church assistants." There is in Chicago a Presbyterian training school. In recent months it has had many calls for pastors' assistants and church secretaries. The deaconess movement in the Methodist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches is credited with contributing much of the recognition of the place of religiously

trained women as church workers, teachers, nurses, institutional directors, evangelists, and community friends.

Quite a variety of titles is found among women church assistants: director of religious education, director of young people's work, church secretary, church visitor, church missionary, deaconess, social worker, pastor's assistant or church assistant. With these should go also various denominational and interdenominational officials. The activities of such workers vary greatly both in the different positions and in the different churches. Qualifications and preparation have not yet been standardized. Many of those who are already in the work feel that they did not have sufficient preparation. Reports from thirty-eight college, normal, and high-school graduates of the Baptist Missionary Training School, Chicago, most of whom are now pastors' wives or home missionaries, show that in the light of their experience they now wish they had had training in such courses as: organization and methods of church work; young people's work; mission study; social service, such as the church's relation to the poor, sick, insane, criminal, industrial problems, social groupings in a community; bookkeeping, typewriting, church finances; music; public speaking; history and principles of modern denominations, comparative religions, and non-Christian faiths in America.

It is concluded that the preparation of such workers should be "thorough, broad, practical, and deeply spiritual." It must have what it has not, that is, standard admission, graduation, method, and curriculum. The following standards are proposed for discussion and consideration:

(1) For admission, Christian character, good health, age at least twenty, and graduation from high school are indispensable. Additional training or experience in business or teaching is

desirable. Four years of college work affords the best foundation. (2) For graduation the standard should be satisfactory completion of a two- or three-year course for high-school graduates, and a one- or two-year course for college graduates, the school year being from thirty to forty weeks, with fourteen to eighteen sixty-minute hours of recitations, lectures, and practice work, and the basis of reckoning credit four hours a week of recitations in each subject. (3) The standard curriculum should include departments of Bible, religious education, the church, community service, missions, business, practical work.

Religious Education Ideals for a Local Church

The Sunday School Worker, Vol. I, No. 1, came from the press in January. The leading article is by the editor, W. Edward Raffety, Ph.D. It is entitled, "Religious Education Ideals for a Local Church." The writer specifies twelve of the ideals which he regards as fundamental in any adequate program of religious education in a modern local church. The importance of each of these ideals is reinforced by striking facts and arguments. The ideals are stated as follows: (1) The standardization of all educational work of the local church. (2) The responsibility of the local church as a whole for the religious education of the whole church. (3) The unification of all religious educational forces within the local church. (4) The adoption by each church of a definite educational policy and program. (5) Every member of every

church "lined up" for some kind of religious education. (6) A director of religious education in each church. (7) A committee or commission on religious education in every church. (8) A church school, that is, all educational forces (Sunday schools, young people's societies, clubs, etc.) considered as departments of the centralized educational organization known as the church school or school of the church. (9) A good religious education library (even though small) owned by every church. (10) The possession, by every pastor, of a standard teacher-training diploma, and within five years the possession of the same diploma by every teacher within the school of the church. (11) A twofold goal of religious education, namely: (a) Individual culture; (b) Social service. (12) In every church a feeling of responsibility for the religious education, not only of its own members, but of the whole community, and together with other churches a vital interest in religious instruction throughout the nation and the entire world.

The following is the closing paragraph of the discussion: Public school education is the foundation of present-day democracy. Religious education guarantees finish and permanency to this foundation. The world will never be made safe for democracy until democracy itself is undergirded by religious education. Each church makes its contribution to world democracy as it religiously educates its entire community, and then pushes on to regions beyond. Nothing less is the full meaning of the Great Commission of our Lord, and nothing less is a worthy ideal.

CHURCH EFFICIENCY

The New World-Consciousness

In *Men and Missions*, January, Nolan R. Best, editor of *The Continent*, has a pertinent contribution under the title above. At the outset he raises the question, "Is 'the new world consciousness' something that is or something that ought to be? Partly both, no doubt." Geographically speaking there

is certainly a world-consciousness today. Heretofore this has been the possession of the studious and the traveled, now it is a common possession. "It is nothing less than a world which this generation dwells in." We are fast losing our provincialisms. The entrance of the United States into the war supplemented the geographical with